

## CREATIVE DARLINGTON BOARD

Monday 18 December 2017 at 2.00pm  
Collaboration Space MR 4/5, Town Hall, Darlington

### MINUTES

#### Present:

Ada Burns (chair)  
Sarah Cooney (presenting 4.)  
Caroline Darnbrook  
Phil Gatenby (presenting 4.)  
Chris Lloyd  
Jo Potter

Natalie Querol (ACE)  
Councillor Nick Wallis  
Katy Weir (presenting 3.)  
Stephen Wiper  
Lynda Winstanley  
Scott Young (presenting 3.)

Councillor Carson - observer

#### Apologies:

Eileen Atkins  
Laura Case  
Ivor Crowther

Sharon Paterson  
Bill Vince

#### 1 Minutes of last meeting

- 1.1 Minutes of the last meeting on Monday 11 September 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### 2 The Hullabaloo and Darlington Hippodrome

- 2.1 This item was moved to the agenda of the Creative Darlington board meeting in February 2018. The board noted the successful openings of Darlington Hippodrome in November 2017 and The Hullabaloo in December 2017.

#### 3 Encountering the Other and ODDMANOUT next steps

- 3.1 Scott Young and Katy Weir made a presentation to the board on the work of their Darlington based new writing theatre company ODDMANOUT. ODDMANOUT working in collaboration with Johannesburg based The Market Laboratory theatre company developed an Encountering the Other project, exploring womanhood in the 2010s drawing on the experience of young people across two continents. The project involved young people in devising an original performance which received its premiere in Johannesburg in October 2017 and at Darlington Hippodrome on 27 November 2017. Encountering the Other was staged as part of the Darlington Theatre Town programme of events. ODDMANOUT secured support from the British

Council and Arts Council England for this international exchange project and the associated programme of participatory activity and organisational development. Creative Darlington allocated support to a week long programme of 19 workshops led by ODDMANOUT and The Market Laboratory in the week preceding the Darlington performance of Encountering the Other, which was well received. (More detail available from <http://creativedarlington.org.uk/reviews/> ).

- 3.2 ODDMANOUT had previously received time limited support from Creative Darlington's Maximising Arts Assets programme to review their mission, structure and branding and business operation, including developing their networks and exploring sources of income. ODDMANOUT has currently been commissioned by Darlington Hippodrome to deliver a community production, Anywhere, with 5 matinee performances and 5 evening performances per day of this promenade production around the theatre running from Friday 2 to Sunday 4 February 2018. The company is working to develop original work and to engaging with communities from a Darlington base, and look forward to developing their relationship with Darlington Hippodrome and other partners. The company currently applies for project funding, but does not receive regular funding from Arts Council England as they have not applied to be a National Portfolio Organisation from 2018 – 2022. The board noted the TVCA Culture programme commitment to sector development.
- 3.3 **Action 1:** Creative Darlington Manager to co-ordinate meeting with ODDMANOUT around their development plans in 2018 and to support promotion of Anywhere.

#### 4 **Conversations in Painting**

- 4.1 Phil Gatenby and Sarah Cooney gave a presentation on their recent Conversations in Painting programme. The programme and development of their successful fundraising proposal which secured a Grants for the arts award from Arts Council England, was supported by Creative Darlington. Creative Darlington normally covers the technical costs and promotion of exhibitions in Crown Street Library, however a small number of exhibition proposals are offered programme budget support, in special cases including successfully securing funding from other sources. Conversations in Painting have become established as an organisation to manage this programme and expect to develop further proposals, focused on visual arts, and painting in particular. Sarah and Phil first made the proposal for the Conversations in Painting exhibition when involved in the Tell Her Story programme of events at Crown Street Library, which also secured Grants for the arts support. Conversations in Painting involved established and emerging local, national and international artists, many of whom had a connection with practice in the Tees Valley, particularly through engagement with Teesside University. The programme included an original exhibition shared in the gallery at Crown

Street Library from Saturday 14 October - Thursday 9 November 2017 with a number of artists involved in leading conversations and gathering feedback from gallery visitors. A programme of three discussion events was promoted featuring a range of speakers, including Stephen Snoddy, Director at The New Art Gallery Walsall (several stayed at hotels in the Town Centre during their visits). Discussions were co-ordinated by Phil and Sarah and chaired by Kerry Harker, from Arts Space in Leeds. Discussion at the events at Crown Street Library Darlington, Platform – A Gallery in Middlesbrough and The Auxiliary art space in Stockton explored various themes. The strength and value of artist led spaces, artist led networks and programmes within the Tees Valley was clear. Blimey! artists network in Darlington, Navigator North, Blah Blah and those co-ordinating the Art Weekender in Middlesbrough, and The Auxiliary in Stockton are amongst those in the visual arts sector generating original proposals and activity, although it was noted that engagement with arts organisations, higher education bodies and local authorities is helpful in helping to maximise resources and add value to their efforts. 1,548 visits were measured at the Conversations in Painting programme in Crown Street Library with further detail available at <https://www.conversationsinpainting.co.uk/> .

## **5 Tees Valley 2025 UK City of Culture opportunity**

- 5.1 A discussion paper was considered by the board, following Tees Valley's announcement in 2015 of the intention to seek UK City of Culture 2025 status, and informed by a recent meeting involving Tees Valley Combined Authority and the local authorities in Tees Valley, considering how we might support the development of a successful proposal and where Darlington's may contribute most culturally in a fashion which supports our cultural offer going forward. The board noted the recent announcement of Coventry as UK City of Culture in 2021 and that competition for UK City of Culture would be fierce. The UK City of Culture application process is very competitive and recently those UK cities which have allocated resources to developing European City of Culture 2023 proposals have secured clarity that they are no longer eligible for that award, which may encourage them to redirect efforts to securing UK City of Culture status in 2025.
- 5.2 The Creative Darlington board noted the importance of the railway bi-centenary in 2025, and planning around that programme regardless of the success of the Tees Valley UK City of Culture proposal. Darlington as a theatre town, a railway town, and as a town to visit (with the potential to further develop festivals including the Festival of Ingenuity) were noted as particular opportunities. The board endorsed the presentation of Tees Valley as a distinct area with particular strengths and diversity (market towns, industrial heritage, coast, the river Tees, great cultural assets and practice and recognised this can be presented as our USP, noting the successful Ruhr Valley programme as a precedent in Europe.

- 5.3 With Theatre Hullabaloo, The Hullabaloo and Darlington Hippodrome, Darlington is well placed to encourage focus around developing the creative offer for children and young people within the programme and more generally around inclusion (given the strength of community engagement, Darlington Cultural Volunteers, programmes including Head, Heart, Hands and both existing activity e.g. IncludFEST and developing proposals (cultural commissioning).
- 5.4 The value of Darlington's existing strategic partnership (Creative Darlington), the One Darlington partnership and of Darlington for Culture in supporting any anticipated programme of community engagement to inform and help to shape the development of the Tees Valley UK City of Culture proposal 2025 was noted.
- 5.5 **Action 2:** Creative Darlington Manager to advise TVCA of board discussion and invite TVCA to send a representative to a future Creative Darlington board meeting to update on their work, including the UK City of Culture 2025 proposal.

## 6 Culture Strategy Action Plan

- 6.1 Then action plan for the Culture Strategy was agreed by the board.
- 6.2 **Action 3:** Creative Darlington Manager to progress design of the Culture Strategy and incorporate the action plan within design and circulate.

## 7 Darlington for Culture and Darlington Arts Festival update

- 7.1 Jolyon Potter provided an update on plans for Darlington Arts Festival 2018. Promotion of Darlington Arts Festival has been supported by Creative Darlington, since the first festival was held in 2013, with a modest budget of £500 expected to support design, print and promotion services commissioned directly by Darlington for Culture. A decision has been made to shorten the Festival in 2018 (which had previously run from late April through the whole of May). It is expected to run over three weeks between 19 May and 3 June 2018 (an announcement has been made post meeting of a Royal Wedding on Saturday 19 May 2018, which may impact on the date of the Darlington Arts Festival 2018 launch).
- 7.2 **Action 4:** JP to approach DBC events for further information on costs installing banners to promote the festival within the Town Centre.
- 7.3 Darlington for Culture has encouraged the submission of proposals to their small arts grants programme to support the development of activity within Darlington Arts Festival 2018. A number of small arts grants awards have

already been made, including one which will support an Open Day programme at Humantics CIC on 28 January 2018 as part of National Venues Week (Humantics has secured Lottery support to upgrade some of their facilities). The open day will be a free event followed by a ticketed concert event.

- 7.4 **Action 5:** Creative Darlington board members invited to provide information to Darlington for Culture of arts events, programmes and activity within the Darlington Arts Festival 2018 boundaries.